used. Nor was the use of such manures practicable, regard being had to the cost involved. The Member, therefore, made the following suggestions:—

(i) One thousand acres of land at Thottapalli in the vicinity of Kuttanad should be reserved for growing shrubs and grass.

(ii) The canals bringing silt to the fields must be broadened and deepened and new canals opened, wherever necessary. All encroachments and obstructions in such canals must be removed.

(iii) Modern implements of agriculture must be got down and their uses demonstrated.

(iv) The formation of Village Unions among cultivators must be encouraged.

(v) A summary and expeditious process akin to that under the Revenue Recovery Regulation should be devised whereby ryots owning lands in one block and failing to contribute their share of money and labour should be compelled to pay up the dues with a penalty without recourse to civil courts.

(vi) The Irrigation Regulation III of 1072 must be amended so as to make it useful to punja cultivators.

(vii) Sufficient funds should be placed at the disposal of the Director of Agriculture for distribution on easy and liberal terms for *bona fide* agricultural purposes.

51. Certain indispensable requirements of punja cultivation.

Mr. Lukka Mathai (Member, Changanacherry Taluk) observed that Government had been so far confining their attention to the improvement of lands in South Travancore and he called attention to the need for the improvement of punja lands in Kuttanad. In the first place, the Member said that heavy loss was being caused by the want of co-operation among punja cultivators and the resulting delay in the matter of putting up ring bunds around the fields or failure to contribute towards the cost of draining water from the fields. The provisions of Section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation were inadequate to meet the evil, the procedure prescribed being tardy and the applications made to the revenue authorities not bringing relief in time to avert loss. He requested that stringent orders should be issued to the officers concerned to dispose of, within 15 days of receipt at the latest, all complaints against parties failing to put up ring bunds or defaulting to pay the cost of draining the fields.

The Member observed that, even under biennial cultivation, most of the punja lands in Kuttanad did not yield a satisfactory crop. That was due to the poverty of the soil and the inability of the ryot to apply artificial manure which was costly. The fields would admit of annual cultivation, if the Mulakkanchira canal (otherwise known as the Vakkathanam-Kuzhimattam canal) and the Chalakkal canal were cut open. In response to representations at the previous sessions of the Assembly, a part of the Chalakkal canal had already been cut, but the work was given up for want of funds. Immediate steps should be taken for completing the Chalakkal channel and for the cutting of the Mulakkanchira channel. The cost might not exceed a lakh of rupees but that was insignificant, regard being had to the extensive areas of lands that would be benefited by the canals and the facilities that would be given for communication and traffic.

Lastly, the Member submitted that the Kuttanad ryots were poor and were often obliged to borrow money and paddy at exhorbitant rates of interest. A long time elapsed before a loan applied for under the Agricultural Loans Regulation was granted. Even if the loan was granted, the authorities demanded security valued at ten times the amount of the loan. He proposed that instructions should be given to the officers concerned to see that agricultural loans were granted on the security of properties valued at the prevailing market price and that applications for loans were disposed of within three months from the date of each application.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Dewan's reply.—In regard to punja cultivation, I may say that Government have not overlooked its importance, but the problem is a huge one and consequently it cannot be solved quickly. From the little attention that I have been able to devote to the subject, it seems to me that this is one of those cases which illustrate the value of small self-governing bodies like local administrative Panchayats. When these bodies are created, people can co-operate and get things done in exercise of their own powers. Government can do very little in a matter like this. Mr. Mathai blames Tahsildars for delays in disposing of complaints under the Regulation. May I ask him if it is at all practicable for a Tahsildar to dispose of hundreds of these simultaneous complaints immediately on their receipt and what value could be attached to disposals made without hearing the parties complained against? I trust that when administrative Panchayats come into existence a good deal of this difficulty will automatically disappear.

In regard to the question of loans as I have already said, although there is a Regulation, the working of that Regulation has been handicapped for want of rules. Nobody knows what the general rate of interest to be charged is or what the equated repayment is going to be, or again what is the amount or the nature of the security to be given. In British India when a loan is advanced for purchase of machinery, the machinery is taken as part of the security. Personal security also is accepted in some cases. There are no rules here in regard to these matters. The rules are under preparation and they will be shortly published. Government do recognise the need for helping the ryots with loans which can be repaid in easy instalments.

With regard to the construction of the two canals mentioned, the Chalakkal canal has been partly executed at a cost of Rs. 11,000 but dropped when it was found that the work was going to cost much more than the original estimate. It is now found that we have to spend Rs. 30,000 more to complete the work and that a good deal of rock has to be blasted in the bed of the canal. In regard to the other canal—Mulakanchira canal—expert opinion is divided and the matter requires further investigation. All I can say now is that these matters will be looked into.

In regard to the amendment of the Irrigation Regulation, the opinion of the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil will be invited.

The Assembly adjourned at 5-20 P. M.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly